

CHAYUS

A Shabbos Stimulus

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In honor of our parents, Tuvia and Lea Schottenstein and Rabbi Yisroel and Chana Sirota

Erev Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5781 – November 20, 2020

ערב שבת פרשת תולדות, ד' כסלו, תשפ"א

כתר שם טוב

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The Soul's Pedigree

These are the descendants of Isaac the son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac (Genesis 25:19).

This verse does not contain a redundancy, because it is insufficient to simply state that Isaac was Abraham's son, as that would place Isaac on par with Ishmael, who is similarly referred to as *Ishmael the son of Abraham* (Ibid., v. 12).

True, Isaac's birth was greatly superior, because Ishmael was born before Abraham received the commandment of circumcision that brought him the marvelous quality of perfect faith, whereas Isaac was born after Abraham had become physically perfect through circumcision. Nevertheless, we could have erred by assuming that Isaac, like Ishmael, was no more than a biological son of Abraham.

Therefore, G-d set the record straight: Isaac's pedigree is beyond being *the son of Abraham*. He has the exclusive privilege of *Abraham begot Isaac*. For our Sages explain this phrase to imply that Abraham's facial appearance was replicated only in Isaac. This special pedigree was subsequently transmitted by Isaac exclusively to Jacob, who transmitted it as an eternal inheritance to each subsequent Jew.

You can now appreciate the value of the Jewish soul, as expressed in the verse, *You are sons to the L-rd, your G-d* (Deuteronomy 14:1). You, the Jewish nation, have the exclusive pedigree of being a part of G-d's Infinite Essence.

Focus: Never underestimate your worth. You carry G-d within you.

חומש תניא רמב"ם

STUDY CYCLE FOR SHABBOS DAY

Synopses: **Chumash**,
Tanya and **Rambam**

Chumash

Toldos, 7th reading: When Esav saw that his parents disapproved of Kena'anite wives, he married one of the daughters of his uncle Yishmael.

Tanya

Kuntres Acharon #4: The physical items used to perform a Mitzva are united with the Infinite Light of G-d, thus uniting the person performing the Mitzva with the Infinite Light of G-d.

Takeaway: The object with which a commandment is performed is energized and "contains" real and meaningful G-dliness. So when you are holding such an object you are literally "grasping G-d."

Rambam

Zmanim, Hilchos Shabbos Ch. 27 – Shabbos Walking Limit (*Techum*): The limit (Biblical and Rabbinical) as to how far one is allowed to walk outside a city. The various scenarios which affect the distance one is allowed to walk (depending on where the *Techum* ends or where the person is at the onset of Shabbos). If someone leaves the *Techum* (on his own, by force or because of an emergency).

Ancestors and Ancestors

Jacob obeyed his father and mother and went to Padan Aram. (Genesis 28:7)

It is indeed important to be proud of our holy ancestors and evoke their merit daily. But it is equally important to recall that *their* ancestors were pagans, and that G-d mercifully removed us from that environment, enlightening us with His Torah and enabling us to lead truly meaningful and purposeful lives.

Along these lines, the Talmudic sage Rabbi Yosef

would always celebrate the holiday of *Shavu'ot*, the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah, with a lavish meal, saying, “Were it not for this day, I would be like any other Yosef walking in the marketplace!”

Pesachim 68b. Haggadah shel Pesach im Likutei Ta'amim uMinhagim, s.v. Mitchilah Ovdei Avodah Zarah and sources cited there; see Likutei Sichot, vol. 8, p. 212; Sefer HaMaamarim 5738, p. 53.

Be Happy! It Is All Good and Always Good

A person who relies on G-d is secure from any mishaps in the present and also feels secure that no bad will happen to him in the future. This is because he believes that anything that happens to him is from G-d and will, therefore, be a cause of joy and happiness. His sustenance will come to him in a restful, calm, and peaceful manner. As it says (Psalms 23:2): *He causes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters.*

Commentary: *Pat Lechem* explains that it is natural—and easily observable—that bad befalls even people who have *bitachon*. Nonetheless, because this person trusts that everything G-d does is for the good, he is able to accept whatever comes his way joyfully.

Furthermore (and perhaps a more advanced level of trust is that), the person who trusts in G-d is constantly joyous and happy, because he knows that a challenging situation merely seems like a difficult situation, but inherently it is good.

The Talmud (*Taanit* 21a) relates a story of Rabbi Nachum, who always reacted to misfortune with unyielding optimism—saying that everything G-d does is for the good. Even when something did not appear to be good, or even seemed bad, Rabbi Nachum would say, “This, too, is for the good” (*gam zo l'tovah*). To the extent that people soon began calling him “Nachum Ish (the man of) ‘Gam Zo.”

Rabbi Nachum was once sent to lead a delegation to the Roman emperor on behalf of the Jewish people to try to persuade him to be kinder to the Jews. They brought along a box filled with gold and diamonds as a gift for the emperor. On the way, they stopped at an inn. Seeing the great treasures, the innkeeper stole the contents of the box and swapped them with sand and soil. The following morning the delegation continued their

journey, not knowing of the innkeeper's actions. When they finally reached Rome and presented themselves to the emperor, Rabbi Nachum handed him the box as a gift from the Jewish people. Upon opening the box, it was found to contain nothing but sand and soil. The emperor was furious, thinking that the Jews were mocking him, and he sentenced the delegation to death. Rabbi Nachum was not dismayed and said, as usual, “This, too, is for the good.” Elijah the Prophet then appeared in the guise of one of the emperor's advisers and said that the Jews would certainly not have mocked the emperor. He suggested that perhaps this was no ordinary sand and soil. He had heard, the “adviser” continued, that when Abraham, the first Jew, went to battle against the four kings, he threw sand and soil at his enemies, which G-d then turned into arrows and deadly weapons. Maybe this sand and soil, suggested the “adviser,” were of the same kind?!

The emperor, who had been at war against a certain enemy that he couldn't defeat, ordered this sand and soil to be tested at the front. Indeed, the Talmud concludes, a miracle happened and the sand and soil turned into deadly weapons. Rabbi Nachum was not only exonerated, but he was also heaped with reward and praise.

Thinking deeper into the story, the emperor already had many precious gems in his treasury, so such a gift might not have accomplished its intended goal. Only

the “sand,” which looked like a disastrous twist of faith, was truly a precious and unique gift for him. (See *Nedar Bakodesh*.)

Bottom line: The man who trusts G-d believes that even if things look dire, they are inherently good and really the best way for him to accomplish what he needs to accomplish, and he is therefore joyous.

יִלְקוּט לוי יצחק על התורה

FROM THE REBBE'S FATHER

זצ"ל Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson

By Rabbis Dovid Dubov & Yaakov K. Chaiton

In honor of Yaakov Ben Zina & Leah Bas Shlima

A G-dly Showdown: Bread vs. Lentils

וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂוּ אֶל יַעֲקֹב הַלְעִיטְנִי נָא מִן הָאֲדָמָה הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי עֵינַי אֲנֹכִי עַל כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמוֹ אֲדָוָה...
וַיַּעֲקֹב נָתַן לְעֲשׂוֹ לֶחֶם וּגְזִיד עֲדָשִׁים וַיֹּאכַל וַיִּשְׂתֶּה וַיִּקַּם וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּבֹז עֲשׂוֹ אֶת הַבְּכֹרָה.

And Eisav said to Ya'akov, "Pour down (my throat) some of this red stuff, for I am exhausted"; he was therefore named Edom (red).

Ya'akov gave Eisav bread and the stew of lentils, and he ate and drank and got up and left, and Eisav scorned the birthright. (Toldos 25:30, 34)

Driving Question: Why did Ya'akov feed Eisav bread and lentils when he only asked for lentils?

Central Point: Bread is the fuel and energy of the G-dly soul. Lentils are the food of the animalistic drive. Ya'akov paired the lentils with bread to tame the coarse tendencies of Eisav.

In Parshas Toldos we read the story of Ya'akov preparing a lentil soup for his father Yitzchak, who is mourning the loss of his father Avraham.

Eisav returns from the field hungry and tired. When he sees the dish that his brother is preparing, he orders him to pour it down his throat. Ya'akov then traded the dish for Eisav's birthright.

The commentaries¹ raise the following question :

Why did Ya'akov feed Eisav the **bread**? We see no mention anywhere that Eisav requested it!

Every element, aspect and detail in Torah is precise, and lends itself to the general understanding of a particular idea. Through understanding the significance of bread and lentils, we can gain a better understanding of the “trade-off” that was going on between Ya'akov and Eisav.

Food that a person consumes draws forth the energy of his Neshoma and energizes him. Certain foods

give strength and an awakening to the G-dly soul, while others awaken the animalistic soul.

In Torah symbolism, there is a parallel between food which nourishes the body and wisdom which nourishes the mind. Taking this a step further, Kabbalah differentiates between various foods representing or embodying different mental capacities and states of consciousness.

Bread — *Lechem* in Hebrew — represents a mental state called *Mochin d'Gadlus* — expanded consciousness (literally, broad-mindedness) — in which a person has clear G-dly revelation; a state of *Chesed*.²

The reason for this, as explained in Chassidus, is because the spiritual root of bread is from the divine attribute of *Chochma* (wisdom). The attribute of *Chochma* is the first entry point and conduit for the infinite light of G-d to be channeled into worlds, and, therefore, even after the energy of *Chochma* descends and takes on the physical appearance of bread, it still retains that G-dliness. It is due to this lofty “energy-source” that bread is the staple of sustenance. This is reflected in the verse³, “and bread, which sustains man's heart.” For this reason it is called *Mochin d'Gadlus* — expanded consciousness.

Lentils is part of a food group called legumes, *Kitniyos* קטניות in Hebrew. The Hebrew word קטניות *Kitniyos* has the same letters as the word קטן *Katan* — small.

1. See, for example, Alshich on Toldos, 25:34.

2. It is interesting to note that we see this “specialty” of bread in a practical sense. It is used for holy purposes such as Challah and Matza. It is also demonstrated by the fact that it was awarded its own special bracha.

3. Tehillim, 104:15.

Kitniyos are typically food for animals. In a spiritual sense it represents *Mochin d’Katnus* - constricted consciousness (literally, small-mindedness). This is sourced in the attribute of *Gevurah* — restraint and limitation.

Thus: Eating bread stems from, and has the potential to elicit, a space of expanded consciousness and G-dly revelation — *Mochin d’Gadlus*. In contrast, eating lentils (*Kitniyos*) stems from, and may elicit, a space of limitation and concealment — *Mochin d’Katnus*.

As we have learned, legumes in general symbolize the empowering of the animalistic soul. However, there are a number of reasons why lentils in particular symbolize this even more:

1. The Shulchan Aruch states that mourners should eat lentils after the funeral of a loved one. Death is concealment (*Gevurah*).
2. The lentils here are red (הָאָדָם הָזֶה). The color red represents *Gevurah* as explained in Kabbalah and Chassidus.
3. If someone comes into contact with a dead creature within the category of the “*Shemone Shrotzim*,”⁴

4. Typically translated as the “eight creeping things”, are animals described in Vayikra, 11:29–30, which have special laws in regarding to ritual impurity and Shabbat.

he becomes impure if the piece was the size of a lentil.⁵

Eisav, representing the animalistic drive for lust and pleasures, wants a portion of lentil soup — concealment of G-dliness.

Yaakov knows that if he only serves him lentils, he is fueling his negative character alone. He, therefore, adds bread to the meal as the antidote for the lentils, so that the revelation in the bread can have an influence over the concealment and transform Eisav⁶.

(*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak* — *Likkutim Al Pesukei Tanach uMa’amorei Chazal*, pg. 182, *Ho’oros on Zohar*, pg. 98⁷)

5. It’s interesting to note that in most other cases, impurity is transmitted with an object that is the size of an olive.

6. There is also a *Remez (Gematria)* here: The numerical value of the word לֶחֶם is 78. The name of Hashem is יהוה = 26; 26 X 3 = 78. This also sheds light on the custom to dip the bread — לֶחֶם — three times into salt — מֶלַח — the same 3 letters, thus equivalent to the name of Hashem which represents Divine revelation.

Eisav’s name עִשָׂו is also 3 letters (which correspond to three aspects of a person’s character). Thus, the bread לֶחֶם which is numerically equivalent to 3 x the name of Havayah is the perfect antidote for Eisav.

7. See *Yalkut Levi Yitzchak*, Vol. 1, Chapters 211, 240.

גאולה GEULAH

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah
Translated by Yaakov Paley

G-d’s Might

In the *amidah*, we ask G-d to redeem us, saying, *ki go’eil chazak atah*, “Redeem us speedily for the sake of Your name, for You are a mighty Redeemer.” Why must we add the adjective “mighty”? Is it not enough that G-d is the One who redeems?

Might is necessary to accomplish something difficult. G-d redeemed the Jews from Egypt “with a mighty hand,” which was necessary because they were not

worthy and they had not served their full term. G-d had to force the redemption.

We ask for the same: Even if we are not worthy, G-d should redeem us speedily, not on our own merits, but for the sake of His name, because as He has shown in the past, He is a mighty Redeemer who forces redemption.

Kedushas Levi

IN MEMORY OF
EMILY MESTECHKINA
BY HER SON

A PROJECT OF
חַיֵּנוּ
CHAYENU
DAILY TORAH STUDY. DELIVERED.